New irrigation projects

2340. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister, of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to start any new irrigation projects to provide irrigation facilities to farmers;

(b) if so, the extent to which the problem of farmers is likely to be mitigated as a result thereof;

(c) whether Government have announced any package for farmers of Tamil Nadu; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) Irrigation being a State subject the irrigation projects are planned, formulated, funded and executed by the State Governments out of their own resources as per their priorities. The Central Government has not proposed new irrigation projects to provide irrigation facilities to farmers. However, a pilot scheme "National project for repair renovation and restoration of water bodies directly linked to Agriculture" has been approved by the Union Government in January, 2005 with a total outlay of Rs. 300 crore for the remaining period of Tenth Five Year Plan. The aims and objectives of the project are to restore and augment the storage capacity of water bodies and to recover and extend their lost irrigation potential. The scheme envisages taking up pilot projects by the States in one or two districts. Ministry of Water Resources has approved projects in 16 districts of 9 States including Tamil Nadu. The schemes for restoration of 8 water bodies in the Sivagangai district and 38 water bodies in the Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu estimated to cost Rs. 10.594 crore have been approved.

Study on underground water resources

2341. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Ground Water Board has found a vast subterranean water body of ground water in the belt around the upper Ganga canal;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any feasibility study has been conducted to check the quantity and quality of this vast underground water resources; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and by when the work in this direction is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Based on ground water surveys and exploration carried out by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), an area of 250 sq. km. along Upper Ganga Canal has been identified which has potential for development of deeper aquifers. The identified area extends from Bhola (North of Jani) in Merrut district to Muradnagar in Ghaziabad district in Uttar Pradesh along the Upper Ganga Canal. The study has revealed that deeper aquifer between 100 and 250 m. is unutilized and is separated from top aquifer by a thick clay bed varying in thickness from 18 to 55 m. The deeper aquifer is under high artesian head and ultimate discharge is in the saline belts in South West.

(c) and (d) From the studies carried out by CGWB, it has been established that quality of deeper aquifer shows deterioration due to base exchange from the clay formation. Flow of ground water is very slow and over a very long period of time, salinity increases in southward directipn. The present quality in identified are is potable and aquifers have high hydraulic conductivity with tubewells capable of yielding upto 3000 litres per minute (LPM).

Since the identified area is under the jurisdiction of Government of Uttar Pradesh, further action is to be taken by the State Government.